



MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Held May 10, 2000

For the purpose of hearing requests from the Greenbelt Fraternal Order of Police.

The meeting began at 8:08 p.m. It was held in the Multipurpose Room of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Rodney M. Roberts, Edward V.J. Putens, Thomas X. White and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Jeff Williams, City Treasurer; David Moran, Assistant to the City Manager; Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk; Anne Marie Belton, Executive Secretary; Craig Rich, FOP President; Mike Dewey, Conductor; John Rogers, State Trustee; Christine Peters, Vice President and Gordon Pracht, Recording Secretary.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Diane Oberg, Greenbelt News Review; Seung Lee, Carl Schinner, Jim Donovan, Lt. Dan O'Neil, Jeff Peters, Mike Lanier, Lt. Tom Kemp, Chief Craze, Marty Parker, Dave Buerger and Mark Lagerwerff.

Craig Rich began the meeting by stating that the Cost Of Living Adjustments (COLA) given over the past ten (10) years have not kept up with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). He stated that the City is currently 10% behind the CPI. In order to correct this deficit, the FOP is requesting a 10% COLA and a 10% pay scale revision this year. The FOP is also requesting an automatic COLA, tied to the CPI, be budgeted each year.

Due to a low unemployment level, hiring qualified police officers has proven difficult. In an attempt to hire qualified officers the City recently began a lateral hiring process. Mr. McLaughlin explained that during the last hiring process, a couple of officers were hired above the entry level salary and others were hired midway into the pay scale depending on their previous experience as a police officer. Mike Dewey noted that some jurisdictions have a years-of-service scale they refer to in order to determine the pay given to an officer lateraling into their department.

The question of why tenured officers are coming to Greenbelt if our salary is low was asked. The response given was that the tenured officers we hire are coming from smaller organizations and are looking for opportunities to get involved in other areas of police work and also to advance in rank. As far as our current officers go, it was stated by John Rogers that their years of service in the City's current retirement system keeps them here. Mr. Putens asked Mr. Rogers to summarize the reasons officers are leaving City employment. Mr. Rogers said the top three reasons officers leave are low salaries, a lack of promotional opportunities, and benefits.

Mayor Davis commented that she would be interested in comparing the benefits of other jurisdictions to those of Greenbelt.

In regard to the snow emergency on January 25 and 26, the FOP is asking that the City

1) follow the direction of the Federal Government and 2) return the leave taken by employees who did not come in and compensate those who did by authorizing overtime pay. Mr. Putens asked what the current policy is in regard to granting liberal leave due to inclement weather. Mr. McLaughlin responded by saying that we currently do not have a formal snow emergency policy, but one should be developed. Mayor Davis stated that she would not want our policy to be based on the direction of the Federal Government. Possible notification processes were identified, such as placing information on the City's Web site, having a phone number with a recorded message, or possibly tying us to another local organization, such as the University of Maryland. Mr. Putens also expressed a need to have a designated work force (essential personnel) for this type of situation. Mr. White suggested asking other jurisdictions what their policy is for inclement weather.

The FOP is researching an alternative retirement system due to the recognized problems with the current MCLEO system. Currently, there are only two or three other small municipalities left in the plan. In order to make a recommendation to Council, another actuarial study will need to be done. Funds for this study are not in the proposed budget, but could be appropriated if needed. Mr. McLaughlin stated that the study could be done once the FOP was closer to choosing an independent company to perform the study. Prior studies have cost approximately \$7,500. Mr. White asked if there was anything we could do legislatively regarding MCLEO. Mr. McLaughlin responded by saying that would be one way to approach the issue.

Mike Lanier commented that he is of the opinion that Council funds pet projects and balances the budget on the employees backs. He also commented that if the City continues to pay police officers half rate, the citizens will receive half-rate service.

Mayor Davis thanked the FOP for coming out and for the presentation packet regarding their budget requests.

Other Business:

Mayor Davis informed council members that the MML dues for FY 2001 went up by \$506.82. This figure was arrived at by using the 1998 assessment base. Mr. Putens informed Council that he has a meeting to attend that needs to be put on the next agenda.

The meeting ended at 10:19 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Anne Marie Belton

Executive Secretary